

JONESBORO

DRAWER 11A

TOWNS - LINCOLN INTEREST

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# Indiana

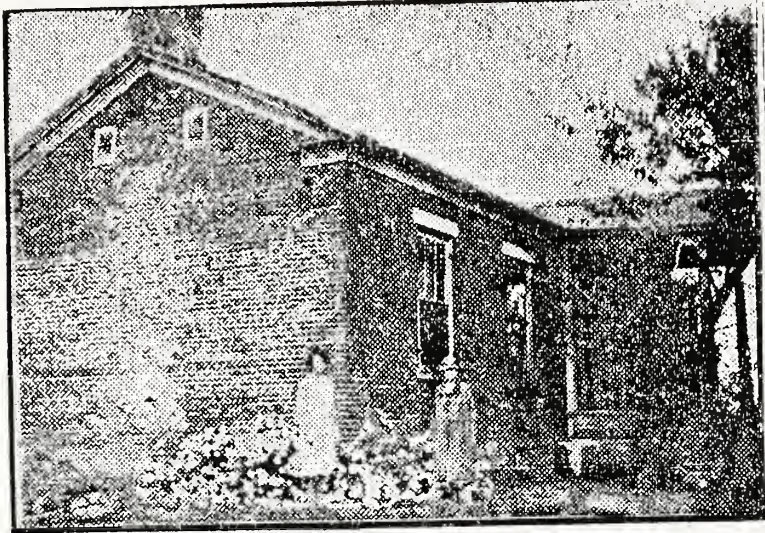
## Cities & Towns

### Jonesboro

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

# Ruins Mark Site of Lincoln's 'Home Town'



This is all that is left of "Jonesboro" vanished village, where once Abraham Lincoln clerked in a store which stood on the present site of the house in the picture.

Mrs. George Bullock (right) has lived in this house for years. Her daughter, seen with her in the picture, is a teacher, and historian of Lincoln's Indiana life.

*Evansville Press 4-29-25*

**A**N old brick house . . . a few vestiges of former habitations . . . and green, rolling hills are all that remain of Jonesboro, Abe Lincoln's "old home town."

One mile west on a dirt road from Gentryville, Ind., 38 miles from Evansville, stands the solitary structure, now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. George B. Bullock, who bought the place 40 years ago from William Jones, one-time employer of the rail splitter.

The ruins of other structures, such as imbedded chimney bricks, may be seen in the yard of the Bullock home.

Many a day, the young Lincoln clerked in the Jones store, on the site next to where the house now stands . . . many a night, he met the boys in front of the store, and swapped yarns.

When business was slack, and William Jones could not afford to keep his "help", Abe would serve the farmers of the neighborhood as a hired hand.

Even then, Lincoln was locally famous for his story-telling ability. It is told that he often kept people around the store until midnight listening to him.

## Unlucky at Love

The young Lincoln went to school about a year in all at Jonesboro, where the school house stood on the ridge directly south of the store. About this time, Lincoln had some of his first troubles with the girls. He was shy, awkward and certainly not handsome, according to the common standards.

Nothing can be proved just how he fared with the fair sex, but he did not marry—and two ladies of the vicinity boasted to their dying day that they had once refused Lincoln.

The Lincoln home stood where

Lincoln City is now found, but there was no town there then, Jonesboro being the nearest settlement. This town died with the establishment of Gentryville in 1832.

The exodus of the family in 1830 was really a last drive for freedom, the result of an inborn urge to do bigger and better things. Captain "Bill" Jones, son of the storekeeper, told that the Lincolns stopped on their way thru Jonesboro, and bought various articles to be peddled on the way. That night while they camped, their oxen escaped, Abe finding them near Dale (four miles north), in the morning. That day they forded Little Pigeon creek and Jonesboro saw them as a family no more.

## On Campaign

Lincoln himself returned some years later on a campaign tour. He and "Nat" Grigsby, a boyhood friend, stayed overnight in the brick house now standing. Nat told later that during the night a cat meowed. Lincoln got up, walked to the hall door, called "kitty, kitty," and put the cat out.

When Lincoln became president, an acquaintance from Gentryville, where all the inhabitants moved, called at the White House to see him. Lincoln asked if anyone at the old home town had voted for him.

"No, not one," replied his guest. "We're all Democrats out there and the best we could remember, you didn't look or act any more like a president than I do!"

## Rail Splitter Began Writing Rhymes at

### Early Age

*Evansville Press*

The love of books was a passion and a worship in the young Lincoln, and was pronounced even in his early years in Kentucky and Indiana.

The farm boys who hung around Jones' store in Gentryville used to talk about Abe, and how he'd stretch out full length before the fire in the cabin and read until past midnight every night—and write on a coal shovel with a piece of charcoal.

Abe picked the "Kentucky Preceptor" to pieces. When he got hold of a book of Bobby Burns' poems, he began writing rhymes himself. He wrote letters for the farmers. He got into the habit of reading out loud, and would weigh words carefully, rolling them under his tongue.

He went to school in southern Indiana, but he couldn't get enough out of school. He read the family Bible thru and figured his way thru the dog-eared arithmetic. Somehow, according to historians, he obtained such books as "Robinson Crusoe," "The Life of Francis Marion," "Pilgrim's Progress,"

"Aesop's Fables," and one book especially, "The Life of George Washington With Curious Anecdotes, Equally Honorable to Himself and Exemplary to His Young Countrymen."

## First Law Book

The first law book he ever put his hands on was borrowed from Dave Turnham, the constable. The title page of the book avowed that it contained—"The revised laws of Indiana, adopted and enacted by the general assembly at their eighth session. To which are prefixed the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the state of Indiana, and sundry other documents connected with the political history of the territory and the state of Indiana. Arranged and published by the authority of the general assembly."

In the year 1828, when Lincoln was 19 years old, and on his trip to New Orleans and back by boat, he was reading during spare moments, "The Columbian Class Book" and "The Kentucky Preceptor."



JULY 3, 1931

VOLUME LVI, No. 35

## JONESBORO

*Boonville Standard  
Boonville, Indiana*

(By William L. Barker)

The Jonesboro of Abraham Lincoln's day was the trading point and community center for the western part of Spencer county and the eastern part of Warrick county. The Jones store and postoffice, a blacksmith shop, the doctor's office and residence, the schoolhouse and ten or twelve log dwellings comprised the town.

A map of Jonesboro prepared by Mrs. Grace Jeanette Maas, daughter of George B. Bullock, who has occupied the William Jones residence for forty-four years, shows the location of these buildings scattered along the Corydon road and the road leading to Rockport. Many of these buildings were still standing when Mr. Bullock acquired the property, and the foundation stones and chimney brick and some heavy timbers are still in evidence. It was here, and hereabout, that Abraham Lincoln received his meager schooling, worked as chore boy on the neighboring farms, chopped down trees, split rails, helped his father build houses, butchered hogs and clerked in Colonel William Jones' store, where he made his reputation as the best story teller in the settlement. It was here he bought the thirty-six dollars worth of merchandise that he peddled along the way to Illinois. It was here that the friends and neighbors gathered to bid the Lincolns goodbye and God speed on their journey to Macon county, Illinois. The old springs, gushing out from the foot of the high rock bluff that marks the boundary of Pigeon bottoms on the north of Jonesboro, still provide an abundance of pure cold water for the occupants of the Jones homestead and the neighboring farms. Originally the residence had an observatory on top reached by a winding stairway, and a long back porch on the north side overlooking the bluff, but these evidences of former grandeur have been removed.

After the Lincolns left Indiana the store and postoffice was moved to the present site of Gentryville, on the Corydon road which runs east and west through Gentryville, and Jonesboro was forgotten. Ida Tarbell spent a day or so at Gentryville when preparing her Life of Lincoln. In the two chapters of twenty-seven pages, devoted to his life in Indiana, she mentions Gentryville two times as the location of the Jones' store, but says nothing of Jonesboro. Dr. William E. Barton in his life of Lincoln gives one chapter of twenty-seven pages to his life in Indiana. He mentions Gentryville once only, and Jonesboro is omitted entirely. Herndon's Life of Lincoln has no mention of Jonesboro in the forty-nine pages covering his life in Indiana. Of Senator Beveridge's history I do not care to speak—he had but little good to say of the Indiana environment of Abraham Lincoln. "Lincoln the Hoosier," by Dr. Charles Garrett Vannest, is truly a Hoosier Lincoln history. John Drinkwater's stage play and the screen version of it have nothing to show that the author ever knew that Lincoln lived in Indiana.

A tablet has recently been erected on the spot in Decatur, Illinois, where Lincoln himself marked the stopping place of his ox team on arrival there in 1830. His magnificent tomb at Springfield has recently been re-built, and the cabin in Kentucky in which his father and mother were married has been restored and is now protected by a substantial brick building, the gift of Mrs. Edmund B. Ball, of Muncie, Indiana.

Salem, Illinois, once his home, where he was surveyor, postmaster, merchant, flatboatman, captain of militia in the Black Hawk war, and representative in the legislature, after many years of decline and decay, has been rebuilt and restored by the people of Illinois. It remains now for the State Department of conservation and the Indiana Lincoln Union to complete the park and the Indiana Lincoln Memorial shrine near Jonesboro, that will perpetuate in history the important part the Indiana environment played in the life of our nation's greatest citizen. Jonesboro, the real scene of so many activities in the life of Lincoln should be recognized and given the important place in history to which it is so justly entitled.

### JONESBORO PICNIC BIG SUCCESS

In spite of the intense heat the people of Spencer and Warrick counties turned out in goodly numbers Sunday to attend the picnic and program at Jonesboro, given in honor of the part this little village played in the life of Abraham Lincoln, where he served as a clerk in the old Jones store.

It was from this historic spot, just a mile west of Gentryville, that the Lincoln family, started for Illinois in 1830, passing along through Warrick county, into Pike county, and to Vincennes, it is claimed.

Plans for bringing affidavits of pioneer residents of this section to prove that Lincoln traveled over this route in Illinois before the Indiana Memorial Lincoln Highway commission were outlined by William L. Barker, president of the Warrick County Lincoln Route association. He also delivered the address of welcome.

Judge Union W. Youngblood, the principal speaker on the program, read a poem composed by Abraham Lincoln in 1844, in which he told of boyhood life around Jonesboro. Youngblood also described the youth of Lincoln in 1830 and stressed the importance of building the memorial highway over the proper route.

A number of affidavits were read by George W. Bullock of Gentryville tending to show that the Lincolns traveled through Jonesboro, Boonville, Lynnville, Winslow and Vincennes on their way to Illinois. Mrs. Arietta F. Bullock of Jonesboro gave her original poem, "Old Time Tales Told of Jonesboro."

In closing the program, H. O. Thompson, Evansville, chairman of the Gentryville committee in charge of the affair, stressed the importance of the work being done by the Warrick county group in its compilation

of a 100-page brief to be presented to the Indiana Lincoln Trail commission.

The Rev. Mr. Tullis gave the invocation, and community singing was led by Ernest W. Owen, of Boonville. Music was furnished by the Hoosier string band of Dale, and readings were given by Miss Betty Meyer and Miss Martha Schlimmer, both of Evansville.

Following the program, visits were made to the old ford of Little Pigeon creek, where the Lincolns crossed. A picnic supper was served at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, with Mesdames H. O. Thompson, Arietta Bullock, L. B. Clark, Fannie Roach and William Wursic and Philip Lutz, Jr., in charge.

The committee from Gentryville was composed of L. B. Clark, Ed Bullock, A. H. Woodall and Ely Grigsby. John Crooks, of Evansville, who had in his possession one of the two rare English coins Lincoln traded for goods in Jones' store, was among those present.

Boonville Standard  
Boonville, Ind - 7/3/31

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*Boonville Standard* 7-3-31

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## JONESBORO HISTORIC PROGRAM

*given in honor of*  
Jonesboro, now reduced from a cluster of buildings to one brick residence, was the site on which about 100 persons assembled last Sunday afternoon to listen to a program of history of the Lincoln period.

Rev. M. L. Tullis gave the invocation and Ernest W. Owen at the piano led the community singing.

William L. Barker, president of the Warrick County Historical Society, gave the address of welcome and stressed the importance of securing proof of the route traveled by the Lincoln family in the journey to Illinois.

Judge Union W. Youngblood, of Boonville, followed and in his talk read from Lincoln's published letters some of the references of the neighborhood scenes in and about Jonesboro, and advocated the building of the memorial highway over the proper route; and in support of this George W. Bullock, of Gentryville, read a number of affidavits.

Music was furnished by the Hoosier String Band, of Dale, and readings were given by Miss Betty Meyer and Miss Martha Schlimmer, both of Evansville. H. O. Thompson, Evansville, was chairman for this meeting.

Lewis Woolfolk, D. S. Barker and C. T. Baker, of Grandview, attended this meeting.

## LINCOLN PICTURES

D. W. Griffith's Abraham Lincoln and Rockport Pageant at Rockport

July 5th, 6th and 7th.

*Grandview, Indiana, 7-3-31*  
The Spencer County Historical Society will present the two pictures, D. W. Griffith's Abraham Lincoln and the Lincoln Pageant at the Alhambra Theatre, Rockport, July 5th, 6th and 7th, being next Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

D. W. Griffith's "Abraham Lincoln" is truly a wonderful presentation of Lincoln's life except the Indiana period of fourteen years, which have been omitted. There is no recognition of these years spent in Spencer county. The scene moves from Kentucky to Illinois without one word or picture of Indiana.

The Spencer County Historical Society is having shown with this picture the film "Lincoln's Early Indiana Life," which includes scenes of historic spots in Spencer county, pictures of people who lived in Spencer county when the Lincolns lived here, and pageant scenes from "When Lincoln Went Flatboating From Rockport." These pictures endeavor to show the outstanding events of Lincoln's life in Indiana and thus complete the missing link in the Griffith picture.

The filming of these pageant scenes was done in order to preserve for historical reference in the future the work done by Spencer county for the "Lincoln Inquiry" and the preservation of her county history. In one hundred years the value of this historic film will be very great and, with its cast of characters as named in the pageant book, will become Spencer County History.

The filming of this picture was made possible by the actors in the pageant, the Spencer County Historical Society, the president and executive committee of the Southwestern Indiana Historical Society, its president emeritus, Judge John E. Iglehart, of Evansville, and by the financial assistance of Mr. John L. Iglehart, of Evansville and New York, whose philanthropies are well known throughout "The Pocket." The actors will be interested in seeing themselves in the movies and to know that they will become a part of a film record of an historic event.

Take your friends with you to see this presentation of these famous historic pictures.



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